

THE MILITANT

HAVANA BOOK FAIR

**New books ‘capture reality
faced by US workers’**
— PAGE 6-8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 81/NO. 9 MARCH 6, 2017

Charges Trump is tool of Moscow reflect crisis of capitalist parties

BY SETH GALINSKY

President Donald Trump held a press conference in Washington, D.C., Feb. 16 to denounce the barrage of attacks on the White House charging that the administration has ties to the Vladimir Putin government in Moscow and “to take my message straight to the people.” Trump said that despite the reporting of a “dishonest” press, his administration is a “fine-tuned machine” that is dealing with the “mess” from previous presidents.

The dispute became front-page news after someone in the so-called intelligence community leaked that there was a transcript of a phone call between retired Army Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, Trump’s incoming national security adviser, and Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak.

Trump’s bourgeois opponents, from liberal Democrats to conservatives like Sen. John McCain and the *Weekly Standard*’s William Kristol, joined by the owners of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and many other media across the country, are seeking to

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Socialist Workers Party says ‘Fight for Amnesty! No raids!’

SWP candidate for LA mayor: Join protests!

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

LOS ANGELES — “A centerpiece of the SWP campaign is the demand for amnesty for all undocumented workers,” Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor here, told a crowd of 125 people at a Feb. 15 candidates’ debate sponsored by the Greater Hollywood Area Neighborhood Councils.

“Mayor Eric Garcetti says that immigrants play an important role in the economy here and brags about L.A. being a ‘sanctuary city.’ But sanctuary without rights doesn’t cut it. Amnesty means that immigrants can join without fear with workers born here to struggle to defend our jobs, our working conditions and our rights.

“Tomorrow is a ‘national day without immigrants’ and I urge everyone to join me at the protest,” he said.

“Working people in Los Angeles and beyond are facing economic carnage in our lives,” Richter said.

“In face of these economic hardships we need to build a movement of the working class to fight for what we need,” he said. “I participated in the protests at the airport against Trump’s anti-Muslim executive order, and at a

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Jay Janner/Austin American-Statesman via AP

March in Austin, Texas, Feb. 16 against immigration raids, one of many protests nationwide.

Hundreds of thousands join ‘Day Without Immigrants’

BY SETH GALINSKY

Hundreds of thousands of immigrants skipped work, kept their children out of school and were joined by other workers in “Day Without Immigrants” demonstrations Feb. 16 to protest the first raids carried out since Donald Trump became president.

More actions have been scheduled around the country since the Department of Homeland Security issued new guidelines to target a broader range of immigrants and step-up deportations of undocumented workers.

Two memorandums from DHS Secretary John Kelly were issued Feb. 20 to implement Trump’s Jan. 25 executive orders on immigration. Despite White House claims that the orders defend “national security and public safety,” their real aim is to divide the working class, intimidate workers without papers and drive down wages to boost capitalist profits.

The first round of raids Feb. 6 to 10 led to the detention of some 680 workers without papers. Immigration and

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Join May Day brigade to Cuba, learn firsthand about revolution



Granma/José Corea

May 1, 2015, march in Havana. This year May Day Brigade, including U.S. contingent, will join International Workers Day as part of two-week tour to see the revolution firsthand.

BY OSBORNE HART

Young people and others from around the world will be heading to Cuba for the 12th May Day International Brigade April 24 through May 8. The brigade is hosted by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). For the first time a delegation from the U.S. is be-

ing organized to participate.

This year’s brigade is in honor of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. Castro was the central leader of the 1959 revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. He led Cuba’s workers and farmers to overthrow capitalism and

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Illinois prison censors ‘Militant’ articles on free-speech fight in NY

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Authorities at the Illinois River Correction Center in Canton, Illinois, have impounded for review and denied a long-term subscriber there three issues of the *Militant*. The reason? Each contains articles reporting on the *Militant*’s fight against censorship at the Attica Correctional Facility in New York.

The “censorship and disapproval by Illinois River would violate the First Amendment rights of *The Militant* and its subscribers, *The Militant*’s Due Process rights, and the applicable regulations by which literature to inmates is reviewed,” attorney David Goldstein wrote in an objection sent to the prison’s publication review officer Feb. 16. Goldstein represents the *Militant* for the prominent civil liberties firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman.

Illinois River prison authorities claim *Militant* issues no. 41, 45 and 46, dated Oct. 31, Nov. 28, and Dec.

12, 2016, are “detrimental to security, good order, rehabilitation, or discipline or it might facilitate criminal activity or be detrimental to mental health.” For issue no. 41, the review

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Momentive workers: ‘We’re
stronger for fight we waged’

Illinois rail car repair workers
strike over health costs

Natives in Canada win victory over gov't seizure of children

BY JIM BRADLEY

Superior Court Justice Edward Belobaba ruled Feb. 14 in favor of a class action suit for damages by Native people in Ontario against the Canadian federal government's infamous "Sixties Scoop." The ruling reflects growing support among working people for the ongoing struggle by Canada's 1.4 million Native people against the legacy of decades of racist discrimination imposed on them by Ottawa.

Between 1965 and 1984 the federal government, in collaboration with a number of provincial governments, forcibly took as many as 200,000 Native children from their homes and placed them in foster care with non-Native families across the country. The massive resettlement was an effort to erase Native youth's cultural heritage under a grotesquely mislabeled child protection program.

"Great harm was done," Belobaba ruled. "The 'scooped' children lost contact with their families. They lost their aboriginal language, culture and identity.

"The removed children vanished 'with scarcely a trace,'" he said.

Marcia Brown Martel, chief of the Beaverhouse First Nation, was "scooped" from her Objibwa community in North Bay in 1967 at the age of 4. In 2009, 42 years later, she launched a class-action suit on behalf of 16,000 other Native people.

"What a day this is," Martel told a Toronto news conference after the ruling.

The suit demands 85,000 Cana-

dian dollars (\$65,000) for each of the 16,000 victims, a total of CA\$1.3 billion. The damages have not yet been awarded. A number of separate Sixties Scoop cases are pending in other provinces.

Carolyn Bennett, federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, said Ottawa does not intend to appeal the ruling. Previously two different governments in Ottawa tried eight times to get the case thrown out of court.

The propertied rulers in other former British colonies also ran assimilation policies. Between 1910 and 1970, an estimated 10 to 33 percent of children of native Aborigines in Australia were forcibly taken from their families for "assimilation." Today these youth are known as the Stolen Generations.

Nine years ago, Ottawa was forced to issue a formal apology for its racist residential school system that operated from 1870 to 1996, run in collaboration with the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and United churches. Over this period more than 150,000 Native children were forcibly taken from their homes and imprisoned in these institutions, which were openly designed to "kill the Indian in the child." Conservative estimates say 6,000 died as a result of unhealthy conditions, neglect, and physical and sexual abuse.

In addition to the apology, the Canadian government was forced to pay a CA\$2 billion class-action settlement to survivors and set up an Indian

Wash. rally: Defend rights of workers, immigrants



Militant/Clay Dennison

MOUNT VERNON, Wash. — Some 700 farmworkers and their supporters marched five miles from Burlington for a rally here Feb. 12. "Worker rights and the rights of immigrants are under attack,"

said the call for the action, issued by Familias Unidas por la Justicia. "We want to show our community that we will not be silenced or intimidated."

Familias Unidas is an independent farmworker union that has been fighting for a union contract with Sakuma Brothers Farms in Burlington. The march and rally were co-sponsored by Community to Community, a farmworkers support organization based in Bellingham. The action protested the Donald Trump administration's moves to further criminalize immigrants and step up deportations, as well as threats to do away with environmental protections affecting farmworkers.

"The bosses rob us. The new president calls us criminals. We just want something better," Filemon Pineda, vice president of the union, told the rally, speaking in both Mixteca and Spanish. Ramon Torres, president of Familias Unidas, told the *Militant* that Sakuma Brothers agreed in September to negotiate a contract, but "is stalling in meeting with us."

Mary Martin, inset, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Seattle, gave greetings. "My party calls for amnesty for all immigrant workers and demands an end to the raids and deportations," she said. "This is a life and death question for the labor movement. We say organize and unionize all workers, regardless of where they were born or how they got here."

— EDWIN FRUIT

Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which traveled through the country for five years to record testimony from survivors. The commission heard 6,750 submissions and its report blasted the residential school system as "an integral part of a conscious policy of cultural genocide."

Native people — North American Indian, Métis (mixed French and Native ancestry) and the Inuit in the far north — are 4 percent of the 36.5 million population of Canada. Twenty-three percent live on poverty-stricken reservations administered by the Department of Indian Affairs under the

hated 1876 Indian Act. More than 50 percent live in urban areas.

The employment rate for Native people is about 13 percent less than for non-Native and their average annual income is about three-quarters that of non-Natives.

Increased resistance by Native people to the conditions imposed on them by Canada's capitalist rulers and the solidarity they have won from working people across the country have increased pressure on the Canadian rulers, as has the long-term trend toward increased integration of Native people into the working class.

THE MILITANT

Defend women's right to choose abortion!

The fight for women's right to choose abortion is part of strengthening the unity of the working class. The 'Militant' calls for fighting to defend women's right to abortion based on equal protection for all guaranteed by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.



Militant/Betsey Stone

Thousands joined protest in San Jose, California, Feb. 11 to defend abortion rights.

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Submissions to the *Militant* may be published in the newspaper in print and digital format. By submitting, authors represent that their submissions are original and consent to publication in this manner.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

SWP candidate: Amnesty!

Continued from front page

rally in Van Nuys against the arrest by ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] of hundreds of workers without papers. The protests had an impact on the judges, who suspended Trump's executive order.

"We need to understand that the root of all these problems we are facing is the crisis-ridden capitalist system," he said.

Richter was asked what he would do about the city's housing crisis.

"The majority of people need low-income housing. The working class is being forced out of their neighborhoods because here and across the U.S. rents have more than doubled since 2000. Most of the jobs created since 2008 have been part-time, temporary or minimum-wage jobs," he said. "There has been no recovery for the working class. We need a massive government-funded public works program to put everyone back to work at union-scale wages, building housing, infrastructure, hospitals, schools — all the basic things working people need."

A worker in the city's film industry asked Richter if amnesty wouldn't cause more unemployment.

"Bringing into the labor movement the millions of workers who are superexploited because they don't have papers acceptable to the government would immediately strengthen the fight of all working people — for jobs, higher wages and safer conditions on the job. This is a life and death question for our unions," Richter said.

Richter also spoke at a Northridge Community Council meeting held the same day. He was asked what the Socialist Workers Party had to say about shootings and other worker-on-worker crimes.

"Hiring more cops is not the way to fight crime. The cops exist to protect the private property of the employing class and to keep working people 'in their place,'" he said. "We have to tackle anti-working-class violence in our neighborhoods by rooting out the source of it — capitalism."

"Under the depression conditions the working class faces today, some families don't have the resources to raise and care for their children. The schools have little to offer. So some of our youth get raised in the streets or in the gangs and they're shaped by the dog-eat-dog mentality at the heart of social relations under capitalism," Richter said. "When young people and others get involved in the struggle to change society, crime goes way down. This was true during the civil rights movement in the 1960s and the fight for industrial unions in the 1930s. That's where people learn their humanity and life gets a purpose."

Richter joined a rally of several hun-

dred Feb. 19 against new federal executive orders targeting immigrants from majority-Muslim countries. It was held at the Islamic Center of Southern California. The action drew Christians, Jews, Muslims and others.

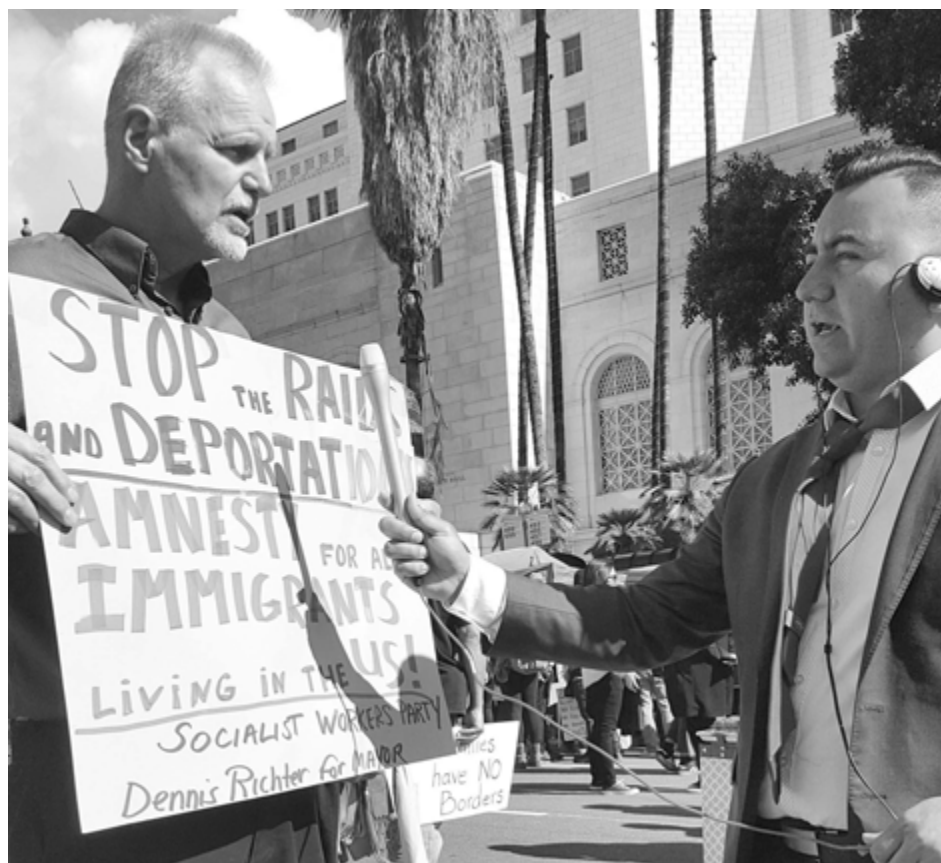
"We need to talk to one another. I can't believe we hate each other. I can't believe that half the country that supported Trump hates us," Hedab Tarifi, chairwoman of the center's board of directors, told the crowd. "We need to talk to those who voted for the president."

"What you spoke about is important," Richter told Tarifi following the rally. "Millions of working people who voted for Trump and millions of others who did not vote are not enemies of Muslims, they're looking for ways to change the economic catastrophe working people face. Trump says he's for the working people, but he demagogically tries to turn us against each other. We have to reject anti-Muslim prejudice, Jew-hatred and attacks on immigrants, and fight together for our common interests."

SWP candidates and members joined tens of thousands across the country who took to the street to protest Washington's new anti-working-class moves against people without papers. They demanded, Amnesty! Stop the raids! No immigration "tests" based on religion, nationality or political views!

Omari Musa, a leader of the SWP from Washington, D.C., was invited to speak when some 500 people rallied and marched Feb. 16 in the "Day Without Immigrants" in Highlandtown, a working-class neighborhood in southeast Baltimore.

"We need to unite and fight our common enemy. We need to fight and build unions to fight the bosses on the job," he told the youthful crowd in Spanish. "Our enemy is the capitalist system. Let's demand amnesty for immigrants



John Battres

Dennis Richter, SWP candidate for Los Angeles mayor, being interviewed at L.A. City Hall by Cal State Northridge student at Feb. 18 rally against government raids and deportations.

to unite us in battle."

"Si se puede," The crowd chanted back.

Socialist campaigners going door to door in the town of Lake Worth, an hour north of Miami, met a number of Guatemalans who work on area farms, in nurseries and in construction.

"We talked to a number of construction workers," Cindy Jaquith, SWP candidate for mayor of Miami, told the *Militant*. "A couple of them told us how they took the lead in organizing workers at the dry wall company where they work to stay home on the Day Without Immigrants. They met with the boss who said he accepted what they were doing. They also kept their kids out of school that day."

In Seattle, Sandi Kamuf stopped by a busy street-corner campaign table where SWP mayoral candidate Mary

Martin was introducing the party to fellow workers Feb. 16. Signs on the table read: "Mary Martin for mayor," "Amnesty now," and "Stop the raids."

"My husband and I lost our home through foreclosure," Kamuf said. "I never thought at this point in our lives we'd have to be fighting and going to meetings. I'd like to come to your Militant Labor Forum Saturday night. I like your campaign ideas."

Kamuf picked up a subscription to the *Militant* and six Pathfinder books the party distributes on the SWP's revolutionary program and the lessons of working-class struggles from the history of the labor movement to the example of the Cuban Revolution.

Arlene Rubinstein in Baltimore and Edwin Fruit in Seattle contributed to this article.

Join May Day brigade to Cuba, learn about revolution

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start on the road to control their own destiny. He died last November.

Guevara was a central leader of the revolutionary struggle and later an internationalist combatant in Africa and Latin America. He was killed in Bolivia in 1967 by CIA and Bolivian army troops, while helping to lead a revolutionary struggle against the dictatorship there.

Pat Scott from Seattle told the *Militant* she is eager to learn firsthand about the revolution's history and accomplishments. She is preparing for the trip by learning as much as she can. She started with the documentary *Maestra*, which recounts the 1961 Cuban literacy campaign. Thousands of volunteers, mostly young women, many of them teenagers, traveled across the country teaching 700,000 adults how to read and write, transforming themselves in the process. This campaign enabled workers and farmers who had been illiterate to deepen their participation in the unfolding revolution.

"The literacy program, that was pretty amazing!" said Scott, who has worked at Walmart for 18 years. Like many signing up for the brigade, it's her first trip to Cuba. "I've never even been outside the U.S."

The two-week brigade features participation in the massive May

Day march in Havana celebrating international workers day in Revolution Square. The next day is an International Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba.

Brigade members will begin April 24 with a week of work and learning, based at the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp. They will spend four hours each day in agricultural labor alongside Cuban workers. For the rest of the day they will take part in talks and discussions, meeting cadres of Cuban mass organizations and visiting surrounding cities.

Then it is on to Havana for the May Day march and international solidarity conference.

For the second week, those who choose will attend the May 4-6 Fifth Seminar for Peace and for the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases in Guantánamo, near land the U.S. has occupied since Cuba lost a war of independence in 1903. In 2002, the U.S. government set up a notorious military prison on its navy base there.

Other brigade members will travel to Cienfuegos and Villa Clara provinces to learn more about the history of the revolution there. They will meet with students from the University of Medicine and visit with members of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

The entire cost for the brigade, in-

cluding meals, housing and travel inside Cuba, is \$512. Airfare to Cuba and back, which is relatively cheap today, is extra.

Applications to join the U.S. brigade are due by March 30. To get more information about how to apply and what you will need to participate, contact the Chicago Cuba Coalition at (312) 952-2618 or email: ICanGoToCuba@gmail.com.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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UK: Communist League says workers need political power

BY TONY HUNT

MANCHESTER, U.K. — “The capitalist rulers fear our reactions to their constant attacks and use the police and courts among other things to chip away at rights we have won, including the presumption of innocence,” Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for mayor of Greater Manchester, told James Shaw in Huddersfield Feb. 4. Clifford and other Communist League members were knocking on doors there, introducing the party and its revolutionary program. Police shot and killed Mohammed Yassar Yaqub there Jan. 2. Yaqub was the front seat passenger in a car boxed in by a “hard stop” of unmarked police cars.

The Communist League is presenting a working-class perspective in contrast to all the other parties — from Labour to the Tories. All these parties seek to prop up capitalist rule over a declining Britain and the little left of its empire.

League members found workers they talked to in Huddersfield have counterposed views about the shooting. While many angrily condemned the police, several supported them. “He had a gun in the car,” Shaw, a self-employed landscaper, told Clifford. “So he had it coming.” Shaw was repeating the cops’ story, which the pro-police media coupled with a smear campaign against Yaqub.

After further discussion on both the facts of the killing and the character of the cops as a tool to protect the capitalist rulers and their property, Shaw changed his mind.

“The killing of Yassar was part of the attack on all workers’ rights,” Clifford said. “I should know that, coming from Ireland,” responded Shaw, who decided to get a subscription to the *Militant*.

“I don’t know if he had a gun or not, but even so they shouldn’t have killed him,” Damian Rhodes, who works as a bricklayer, told Clifford.

“I don’t believe you can change the police,” Clifford said. “The police are a vital prop for the wealthy rulers. We need to build a working-class movement of millions to make a revolution replacing capitalism and end the way the police are used against working people.”

Later Clifford joined in a lively, youthful “Justice for Yassar” protest of about 100 people in the town center. He called for the prosecution of the cops involved in the shooting.

Forging unity among working people comes up frequently in discussions on the doorstep. Eric Abone, a computer worker in Little Hulton, asked Clifford and Communist League member Andrés Mendoza what they thought of Labour Party candidate Andrew Burnham, who has called for curbs on immigration.

“The idea that immigrants are taking jobs, housing etc., that’s a dead end for the working class. It divides us when we need unity,” Clifford said. “Burnham is

a capitalist politician, which means he seeks to take our eyes off the source of the attacks on working people — the capitalist bosses.” This was the second time the two Communist League members visited Abone. He got a copy of *The Clinton’s Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* on the first visit and a subscription to the *Militant* on the second.

On Jan. 14 David Icke, a well-known conspiracy theorist, brought his “World Wide Wake Up Tour” to the O2 Apollo theatre here. He addressed a sellout crowd for over 12 hours peddling Jew-hatred, including among other notions the myth that “Rothschild Zionists” control the world.

Clifford wrote to the Manchester Jewish Representative Council in the name of the Communist League “to publicly register our opposition to what was to all intents an anti-Semitic rally. We express our solidarity with the Jewish people.” Michael Rubinstein responded for the JRC, expressing “gratitude for your message of support.”

“Jew-hatred is a deadly threat to the working class,” Clifford said. “Those who spew this filth aim to protect capitalist rule, scapegoating Jews as the cause of the crisis hitting workers and ruining middle-class layers, not the capitalist system itself.”

There is hysteria in the middle-class left in the U.K. at the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president, mimicking similar hysteria in like-minded groups in the States. An online petition here



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Peter Clifford, right, Communist League candidate for mayor of Greater Manchester, addresses Feb. 4 rally in Huddersfield demanding prosecution of cops who killed Yassar Yaqub.

opposing a “state” visit for Trump because “it would cause embarrassment to Her Majesty the Queen” has garnered over 1.8 million signatures. British Prime Minister Theresa May invited Trump for a state visit — the kind that entails royal hoopla — as part of efforts to solidify the two imperialist powers’ “special relationship” as the British rulers head toward Brexit.

Thousands attended demonstrations across the U.K. Feb. 20 to “Stand up to Trump.” The actions have been marked by British nationalism, Clifford told the *Militant*. “If Trump has a state visit, I think it will make our country look bad,” student Sara Sharp told the *Independent* at the action that day in London.

“Those clamoring about Trump’s visit celebrate ‘our’ — i.e. British — values. But there is no ‘we,’” Clifford said.

“There are two classes — the working class and the propertied rulers — with opposite class interests.

“The capitalist class here rules by divide and conquer. They keep foreign-born workers as second-class citizens to superexploit them, just like their U.S. counterparts,” he said. “They try to pit us against each other.” In a BBC Radio Manchester interview, Clifford was asked if he would back the call to bar Trump from the U.K. “I wouldn’t turn out to welcome him, but I wouldn’t back a ban on him coming here,” Clifford said. “I would challenge him to a debate. Trump got elected by appealing directly to working people facing American ‘carnage.’ Trump’s goal is to save U.S. capitalism.

“We need a movement of millions of workers to make a revolution to end capitalism,” he said.

‘Militant’ fights Illinois prison censorship

Continued from front page

notice adds, “work stoppage and prison rebellion,” with no further explanation.

The notices impounding the paper were dated Dec. 10, 2016, but not sent to the *Militant* until Jan. 27 — 48 days later, in violation of Illinois state law.

The Oct. 31 issue (no. 41) reported the paper’s intent to challenge Attica’s impoundment of the Oct. 3 *Militant*, which had featured coverage on the 45th anniversary of the 1971 Attica prison rebellion. It also ran an article reporting on several protest actions that took place in prisons in the U.S. demanding higher wages and better conditions.

“Illinois River (correctly) found no reason to reject or censor” the Oct. 3 issue, noted Goldstein, “and provided no explanation why No. 41 reporting on censorship is objectionable.”

Illinois River officials withheld two further issues of the paper reporting on Attica’s censorship. These articles included statements of support from the New York Civil Liberties Union, PEN America, National Lawyers Guild and other groups.

Given that these articles “are merely reporting on a legal challenge to the censorship of another correctional facility, it is difficult to conclude that the censoring of these three issues is anything other than a blanket ban on any mention of prisoners’ constitutional rights,” Goldstein said. “However, prison authorities have no license either to single out *The Militant* for censorship because of

disagreement with its viewpoint, or to ban any mention of prisoner’s constitutional rights.”

The *Militant* is mailed to 140 subscribers in some 72 prisons in the U.S., and is read by many others.

“The constitutional rights to free speech and freedom of the press do not stop at the prison gates,” said *Militant* editor John Studer. “Workers behind bars have the right to read different political views and form their

own opinions.

“And like we’ve done with the Attica fight, we’ll be seeking statements of support from individuals and groups demanding an end to censorship at Illinois River,” he said.

To send a statement of support or make a financial contribution to the *Militant*’s fight against censorship, contact themilitant@mac.com or write the paper at 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, N.Y. 10018.

Anti-labor outfit targets union at Momenive

An anti-labor outfit posing as a socialist current in the working-class movement is trying to convince IUE-CWA workers who waged a 105-day strike against Momenive Performance Materials to quit their union and divide and weaken their ongoing fight against the bosses.

The Michigan-based Socialist Equality Party, which runs the World Socialist Website, has a long history of anti-labor disruption aimed at workers engaged in often bitter struggles and at revolutionary working-class organizations like the Socialist Workers Party.

In a recent article posted on their website, Philip Guelpa writes that “to take this fight forward Momenive workers must break from the straitjacket imposed on them by the union and form independent strike committees.” If followed, this course would set back the labor movement.

The anti-union group doesn’t build solidarity, it sows division, calling for strikers to abandon their unions. They argue all U.S. labor organizations are in a conspiratorial alliance with the employers. As hard-fought battles drag on, they seek to get the ear of workers who get frustrated or discouraged, especially when they’re faced with obstacles union officials place in front of fighting as effectively as possible.

But the road around those obstacles is not to split the union, but to make our union stronger as our fights with the employing class grow, to transform our unions into class-struggle fighting machines.

The outfit has intervened against the unions in recent years in battles of workers at Cooper Tire in Findlay, Ohio; Caterpillar in Joliet, Illinois; Con Edison in New York; American Crystal Sugar in North Dakota and Minnesota; and elsewhere.

— JACOB PERASSO

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Momentive workers: ‘We’re stronger for fight we waged’

BY JACOB PERASSO

WATERFORD, N.Y. — Workers at Momentive Performance Materials voted 378-211 to approve a contract Feb. 14, ending a 105-day strike that won widespread support from unions and workers in the region. Some 700 workers walked off the job Nov. 2 after rejecting the “last, best and final offer” Momentive made to three International Union of Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America locals that represent workers at the company.

Strikers maintained picket lines 24 hours a day for the entirety of the strike at eight gates of the chemical plant here. Supporters organized a nonstop supply of firewood for burn barrels to keep strikers warm and made food donations continuously throughout the strike.

“Support got stronger towards the end from community and labor organizations,” said Dominick Patrignani, president of IUE-CWA Local 81359, which represents most of those on strike. “We were getting new support from unions in Massachusetts and New Jersey.”

The bosses’ hatred for the visible, sometimes intense and often jovial picket lines was reflected in their efforts to shut them down. Momentive demanded judges impose restrictions on the number of strikers and what they could say and do on the lines — but they failed.

The contract voted up by the unionists included many of the cuts in benefits originally proposed, including ending retiree health and welfare benefits, denying weeks of already earned vacation for many workers, and, according to workers interviewed, increases in what workers pay for their own medical care costs. The new contract, which runs through June 2019, allows more flexibility for the company in using nonunion labor and increased automation. Patrignani said that a proposed cut in 401(k) retirement account contributions the company demanded was removed from the contract. The agreement includes a 2 percent raise in 2017 and 2 percent in 2018.

Twenty-six workers were fired by Momentive during the strike. The terminated worker provision was “the most upsetting part of the deal,” said Patrignani.

“Of the 26, 11 of us were fired for mostly trumped-up charges while on the picket line,” Mike Horton, a shop steward and operator with seven years in the plant, told the *Militant*. Horton is one of those fired. “Fifteen were fired from one of the buildings where the company accused us of sabotage. They can’t prove any of it but they said if we didn’t approve the contract none of us would ever return. They also threatened to lay off 150 workers if we didn’t sign.”

The agreement says the terminations of those accused of sabotage will be reviewed by a “neutral investigator” appointed by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, and that the other 11 will be subject to “expedited arbitration, should the Union demand.”

“They tried to outwait us on the economic side,” said William Johnson, another striker. “We received letters just before the vote saying that the company had challenged our right to receive unemployment. It was just a scare tactic, but it had an impact on the vote.”

“They used the government to push the contract,” added Horton. Gov. Cuomo

intervened directly in the final stages of the negotiations.

“We actually found out about the agreement between the CWA and Momentive through the media,” Johnson said. News of the settlement appeared in the *New York Daily News* and other papers Feb. 9. “The workers Win One at Momentive,” the *Daily News* editorialized, depicting Cuomo and other Democratic Party politicians as the heroes of the day and painting the tentative contract as a done-deal victory. Strikers attended information meetings on the agreement a couple days later and voted Feb. 13-14.

“We were under a lot of pressure to vote for the contract under those conditions because it would have appeared unreasonable for us to vote down a contract that supposedly resolved our main grievances. We were concerned we would lose public support because of this,” Johnson said. “All they did was push the numbers around, it wasn’t a better contract than what we had previously voted down.” About a dozen strik-



New York State AFL-CIO/Kevin Eitzmann

Unionists on strike against Momentive Performance Materials and supporters rallied against company concessions and for contract Dec. 13 in Waterford, New York. After debate, majority approved new pact Feb. 14. Strike won solidarity from other unions and community groups.

ers the *Militant* spoke with around the burn barrels shared this view.

“We still have our union together,” said Johnson, noting that the company acted as if they wanted to break the union. Johnson said he thought the union was stronger today because of the fight they waged.

“We hadn’t had a strike here since 1969,” he said. “There is a learning

curve. We had to learn to contain our emotions on the picket line.”

“It is important that we finally stood up,” Horton said, noting that union workers had taken significant cuts in wages and benefits in two prior contracts dating back to 2010. “While we were out we were very solid, we stuck together. We’re learning and the new contract is up in two years.”

Illinois rail car repair workers strike over health costs

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CREST HILL, Ill. — After more than a month on strike the 74 members of Teamsters Local 710 are maintaining a spirited round-the-clock picket line outside Railway Industrial Service’s freight-car repair facility here.

“The membership voted down the last company offer” and the strike began Jan. 17, Local 710 Business Agent Michael Ramirez told the *Militant*. “The owner, who makes all the financial decisions, is not participating in the bargaining. It’s not serious until he is.”

The company’s first contract proposal included demands for a 50 cents per hour wage cut and an increase in workers’ weekly contribution to health insurance from the current 14 percent of gross pay to 19 percent.

“The company came back with what

they called their ‘last, best, and final offer,’ abandoning the demand for a wage cut,” Justin Kwarta, a union steward who has worked over 30 years at the plant, said. “But they are insisting on imposing the increase in medical care costs.”

“The insurance is the number one issue,” said Jose Morfin, a welder and forklift driver with 41 years at the plant. “The last time we were on strike was 25 years ago. The issue then was wages, now it’s insurance. The company’s proposal actually amounts to a wage cut.”

The average pay is \$19 per hour, Kwarta said.

Strikers have received support from members of the Teamsters, United Auto Workers and other workers in the area. Over 70 religious leaders from around Joliet have announced their support.

A solidarity rally was held by the plant Feb. 9, drawing unionists and others from throughout Joliet and Chicago. The workers marched to the company office, delivering letters from the community backing their strike and demanding the bosses negotiate a fair contract.

A week later the union got a letter from the company saying they were “open to further discussions with the goal of arriving at a new collective bargaining agreement.”

“This goes to show that persistence really does pay off. These members have continued to stand together, showing the same level of solidarity on day 31 as on day one,” said Ramirez.

The Teamster local is raising money to help strikers meet their bills. Make contributions online at <https://www.gofundme.com/local-710-railway-strike>.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 6, 1992

Flight attendants at Nationair, Canada’s largest charter airline, voted in Montreal and Toronto February 2 to step up their fight for a new contract. Four hundred and fifty attendants in the two cities, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, have been locked out by the company since November 19.

Attendants earn an average of \$15,600 per year. They are fighting for a wage increase, minimum daily pay, more rights over scheduling and schedule changes, and other benefits.

Many flight attendants hold down two jobs or live with their parents. A majority are under 30 years old.

Sitting in the section of the flight lounge, Anne Boulet and Nathalie Dussault, both members of the union’s public relations committee, explained how flight attendants can end up working 20 hours at a stretch on round-trip flights, reducing customer service and safety.



March 6, 1967

The Ku Klux Klan has taken another victim in Natchez, Miss. Wharlest Jackson, former treasurer of the Natchez NAACP, was killed when a bomb exploded in his truck as he was leaving his job at the Armstrong Cork plant Feb. 27.

Jackson had just been promoted to a paint mixing job previously done only by whites. Two years ago, George Metcalf, local president of the NAACP, was crippled by a bomb explosion in his car as he was leaving the Armstrong plant where he is also employed. The plant has been notorious for its concentration of Klansmen.

Charles Evers, NAACP state field secretary, said that Jackson’s death made a total of 41 killings of Negroes in the state since his brother Medgar was gunned down three years ago.

The FBI announced it is probing Jackson’s death. Black people of Mississippi will do well to look to their own resources for defense against the Klan.



March 7, 1942

The indiscriminate and brutal witch-hunt being conducted against non-citizens born in countries at war with the United States is now being directed at naturalized citizens and native-born Americans whose ancestry is Japanese, German and Italian.

The move, having the character of a racial pogrom, was initiated Feb. 20 by an executive order from President Roosevelt, giving the War Department and the Army the power to arbitrarily remove any person, citizen as well as alien, from his home and exclude him from any area which the Army may designate as a military area.

The immediate purpose of this order is to permit the Army and the FBI to remove West Coast residents of Japanese descent.

Although the order does not constitute the establishment of martial law, those citizens affected by an Army order will in effect have no recourse to civil justice.

New books ‘capture reality faced by US workers’

Panelists at Havana book fair discuss capitalist crisis, response by working people

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND MAGGIE TROWE

HAVANA — “I’m struck by the interest these books have generated here,” said Fernando González, speaking at a Feb. 10 presentation of three new titles by Pathfinder Press on the class struggle in the United States today.

“These books capture the reality people in the United States are living through on a daily basis — a reality we often don’t see. It’s a reality that’s not reflected on CNN, in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, on ABC, NBC, CBS or any other U.S. TV networks.

González, one of five Cubans who spent more than a decade and a half in U.S. prisons for their actions in defense of the Cuban Revolution, is vice president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples. He was speaking on a panel held the first day of the Havana International Book Fair. The annual fair, which ended Feb. 19, was a giant cultural festival that included book presentations, roundtable discussions, and other events, along with dozens of bookstands where thousands came every day to browse and purchase literature by publishers from Cuba and other countries.

The Pathfinder titles that were presented included *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning under Capitalism* both by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The third, *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? A Necessary Debate Among Working People*, is by Mary-Alice Waters.

Joining González to discuss the books were Elier Ramírez, a historian at Cuba’s Council of State; Enrique Ubieta, a writer and popularizer of Marxism widely read among youth and others; and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and a leader



Panel at Havana Book Fair Feb. 10 presented three new titles on U.S. class struggle. From left: Enrique Ubieta, Cuban writer; Fernando González, vice president, Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples; Javier Dueñas, director, Abril publishing house; Mary-Alice Waters, Socialist Workers Party leader; Elier Ramírez, historian, Cuba’s Council of State. Turnout reflected interest in Cuba about class politics in U.S. today. Right, Pathfinder Press book display at event.

of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. The event was chaired by Javier Dueñas, director of Casa Editora Abril, publishing house of Cuba’s Union of Young Communists (UJC).

As González indicated, the new books drew curiosity and serious interest among the steady stream of visitors to the Pathfinder stand during the 10-day book fair. They asked questions such as: How do you explain Donald Trump’s electoral victory? What is life like for working people in the United States today? What about the continuing wars in the Mideast and other parts of the world? How do other people in the United States respond to socialists and communists like you; do you face government repression?

That interest was reflected in the several dozen people who attended the presentation, including a good number of university students and other youth. It was also registered in the sale of nearly 440 copies of the three books during the fair.

‘Carnage’ facing working people

“If you had read these three books a year ago, nothing happening today

in U.S. politics would be a surprise to you,” said Waters, opening the panel discussion. (Her full remarks are reprinted on page 7.)

She noted President Trump’s reference in his inaugural speech to “this American carnage” to describe conditions of life many working people experience today. That phrase, she said, “was singled out by the hysterical anti-Trump media as an example of the president’s twisted refusal to acknowledge what those who’ve benefited so greatly from the ‘Obama years’ portray as an economic recovery.”

But carnage is exactly “the word you’ll find in the pages of *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*,” Waters said. It describes the consequences for U.S. working people of a quarter century of social policies carried out by the Clinton White House and subsequent Republican and Democratic administrations: high levels of joblessness, a soaring prison population, increased use of solitary confinement, record numbers of deportations, growing suicide rates among young adults, an epidemic of drug addiction in smaller towns and devastated rural areas, unending wars abroad, and much more.

When Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton contemptuously declared that those who weren’t going to vote for her — that is, those who weren’t going to vote to continue the carnage — were a “basket of irredeemable deplorables,” at that moment “she was finished,” Waters said.

As a result of these worsening conditions, caused by capitalism’s global economic and social crisis, “there is today greater openness in the U.S. working class than at any moment in our lifetimes to discuss the broadest social questions and political issues,” she noted. There are greater opportunities — and greater responsibilities — for communist workers as they join these discussions and the struggles working people are engaged in.

‘Books show class struggle in U.S.’

“These three books, which come together like a single volume, show us the situation that is developing today in the class struggle in the United States,” said Elier Ramírez. “This is very important for Cubans to learn about.”

Drawing on *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, he highlighted

Continued on page 8



Carnage, deplorables: 2 words explain workers’ openness to talk politics

Below are the remarks by Mary-Alice Waters at a Feb. 10 presentation of three new books on the U.S. class struggle at the Havana International Book Fair (see accompanying article). Waters is a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press. Copyright © 2017 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

First of all, on behalf of Pathfinder, a warm welcome to all.

Special thanks goes to our chairperson, Javier [Dueñas], the director of Casa Editora Abril, who helped us put this panel together. And above all I want to express our appreciation to Fernando [González], Enrique [Ubieta], and Elier [Ramírez]. It’s an honor to have such a well-qualified panel to speak on the questions at the center of these three new books — questions involving the political consequences in the United States of the inexorable advance of capitalism’s global crisis. It’s a crisis unlike any we’ve known in our lifetimes.

I want to emphasize one point above all.

If you had read these three books a year ago, nothing happening today in

US politics would be a surprise to you. Nothing.

But it’s not too late. If you want to be prepared for what’s coming, please get them today. And read them. We’re making a special offer. Three for the price of two, so there’s no excuse not to read all three.

American ‘carnage’

In his inaugural address three weeks ago, President Trump used the phrase “this American carnage” to describe the conditions of life faced by broad layers of US working people today, both rural and urban. That word — *carnage* — was singled out by the hysterical anti-Trump media as an example of the president’s twisted refusal to acknowledge what those who’ve benefited so greatly from the “Obama years” portray as an economic recovery.

It was a “dark” speech, these commentators said. It failed to recognize that “America Is Already Great,” echoing the imperialist sloganeering of Hillary Clinton’s liberal Democratic Party campaign.

But carnage it is.

That’s exactly the right word. It’s the

word you’ll find in the pages of *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, published months before the changing of the guard in Washington.

Its accuracy is backed up by massive documentation in the pages of these three books. Each of them recounts the consequences for US working people of the social policies put in place, with bipartisan support, over the quarter century ago since the inauguration of Bill Clinton, policies supported and continued by Presidents George W. Bush and

“It’s not only the social inequities that have accelerated in the last quarter century. It’s the class inequalities . . .”

Barack Obama.

You’ll find here the machinations used to conceal the true level of joblessness, as well as workers’ declining real wages.

You’ll find the consequences of slashing social welfare programs for women and children.

You’ll find facts on the soaring prison population, the record numbers of deportations and prosecutions of immigrants, and the large increase in federal crimes for which a judge can impose the death penalty.

You’ll find the growing suicide rate among young adults, and the epidemic of narcotics addiction in small cities, towns, and devastated farming and mining areas.

You’ll find the toll on the working class of Washington’s endless wars and its repeated deployments of workers and farmers to Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. And much more.

More important than charts and statistics, however, is the visual evidence available to anyone willing to look as they drive across vast areas of the United States. I hope Fernando will speak about what he saw, with his own eyes, when the US Bureau of Prisons gave him the “opportunity” to drive through the rural Southwest in a prison bus transporting him to Safford, Arizona.

Growing class inequalities

It’s not only the social inequities that have accelerated in the last quarter century. It’s the *class* inequalities.

It’s not just the wealth of the multimillionaires, including Trump and family, or multi-multimillionaires like their rival Democratic Party family, the Clintons. It’s also the steady expansion of high-earning professional and upper middle-class layers who dominate the media and populate the universities, administrative and “intelligence” agencies of the federal government, “Silicon Valley,” and tens of thousands of “charitable” foundations and other “nonprofit” institutions that promote worldwide

the capitalist and imperialist interests of their financial backers.

Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? — one of two books by Jack Barnes, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party — that we’re presenting here today, deals with the growing significance of this social layer.

In these privileged circles, it’s common to hear someone remark that they can’t understand how Trump won the election — “I don’t know a single person who intended to vote for him.”

This class isolation was captured by a *Washington Post* columnist a few months ago who was voicing his fear of the rising anger of millions of working people in the US. “Never have so many people with so little knowledge made so many consequential decisions for the rest of us,” he wrote. “We must weed out ignorant Americans from the electorate.”

For him, this “ignorant electorate” clearly includes the overwhelming majority of the working class in the United States.

It is not Trump’s crude insults, his vulgar misogyny, or anti-immigrant demagoguery that this well-remunerated social layer finds most unsettling. What they fear is something different. They fear the millions of men and women — Black and white, immigrant and native born, religious and nonreligious — who recognize their own lives, and the lives of their neighbors, in that word *carnage*.

When Hillary Clinton announced during the election campaign that those who weren’t going to vote for her — those who weren’t going to vote to continue the carnage — were nothing but a

Continued on page 8



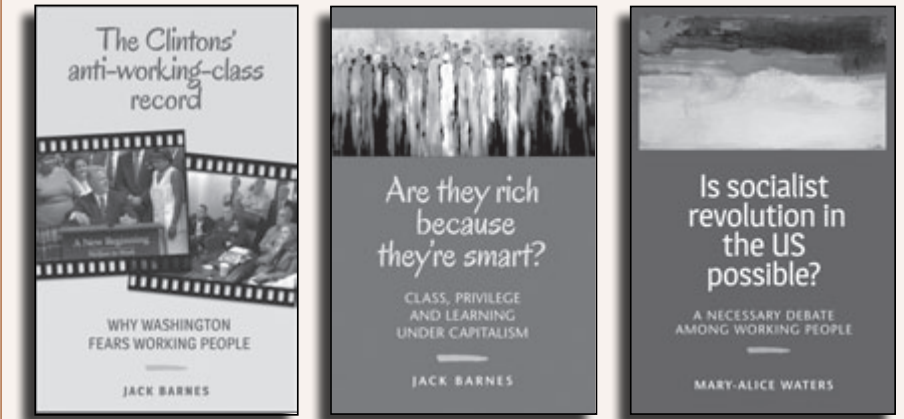
KUOW Photo/Posey Gruener

Above, line for free health clinic at Seattle exhibition hall opens just after midnight, with tickets handed out at 5 a.m. New U.S. president’s use of “carnage” to describe conditions working people face was slammed by hysterical anti-Trump press, Mary-Alice Waters said. But word accurately depicts effects of quarter century of capitalist crisis and policies of Clinton, Bush, and Obama White Houses to boost profits and defend exploiters’ rule.

For the first time in decades, the US rulers have begun to fear the working class

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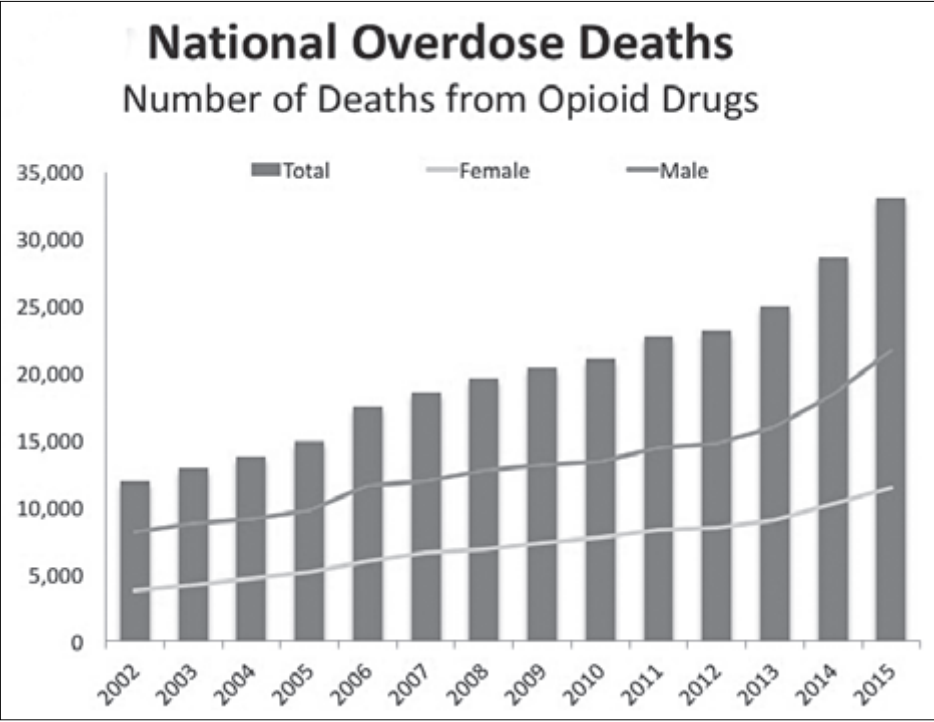
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Above, Pillowtex textile mill in Kannapolis, North Carolina, that closed in 2003 leaving hundreds without jobs. “The U.S. has 320 million inhabitants,” said Fernando González, one of five Cuban revolutionaries who spent more than 15 years in U.S. prisons. “Maybe, 100 million of them live in big cities. What about the other 220 million?” When he was transferred by bus to a prison in Safford, Arizona, “We saw small towns that used to be on a rail line and now they’re ghost towns. ... That trip was a lesson in the poverty that exists in the U.S.”



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, CDC Wonder

New Pathfinder books offer “massive documentation” of rulers’ anti-working-class course, Waters said, including “growing suicide rate among young adults” and “epidemic of narcotics addiction in small cities, towns and devastated farming and mining areas.”

Reality faced by US workers

Continued from page 6

some of the policies carried out by that administration, such as the elimination of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, a 60 percent increase in the prison population, and the all-time high in deportations of immigrant workers.

“At the same time that President William Clinton was signing these harsh laws against the working class in the United States, he was doing the same against Cuba with the Helms-Burton Act,” which intensified the U.S. economic war against that country.

These government policies, continued by successive administrations, are being carried out “in the midst of a slow-burning economic depression of the capitalist system in which it’s the working class that bears the brunt of the crisis,” Ramírez noted. In this situation, he said, it’s not surprising “why Hillary Clinton was such an unpopular candidate” and why “many workers were disgusted by both candidates.” He pointed to the cartoon in the book’s introduction in which one house has a yard sign reading “She’s worse” while a sign next door says “He’s worse.”

Ramírez said he appreciated the book *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* Agreeing with the author that the answer is “Yes, but it depends on us,” he said it made him think of arguments heard decades earlier that a socialist revolution was impossible in Cuba.

He illustrated the point with a story about his grandparents, who had emigrated to Miami during the Batista dictatorship in the 1950s. “When Fidel [Castro] visited Miami back then, my grandfather joined the July 26 Movement, and one of Fidel’s first meetings in Miami was held in my grandparents’ house. My grandmother told him, ‘Are you crazy? What are you doing with that man who attacked the second-biggest military barracks in Cuba using bird-hunting rifles? Do you think that man selling those little pamphlets’ — it was *History Will Absolve Me*, which was sold by the July 26 Movement — ‘is going to bring down Batista?’ Of course, my grandfather was right, and eventually my grandmother joined him.”

“The Cuban Revolution destroyed all the ‘theories’ that said a socialist revolution was not possible in a country like Cuba. And if it was possible in Cuba, why won’t it be possible in the United States?” Ramírez concluded.

Enrique Ubieta focused on *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* It explains the sharpening class inequalities in the United States and resulting conflicts intensified by the global depression.

Ubieta noted the book’s description of the expansion of a “meritocracy” of well-paid professionals “who serve the capitalist system that has enriched them,” of which former President Barack Obama is part. The capitalist class, he said, rules not just through coercion but uses this privileged upper-middle-class layer to bolster its class interests and values.

That meritocracy “has absolute contempt for workers, whom they consider ignorant, stupid and worthless,” Ubieta said. U.S. society “has become more polarized economically as workers have become impoverished and have lost social gains that were won through years of struggle.”

The U.S. ruling class is beginning “to fear workers” as anger rises among working people at these conditions. This anger “is reflected in the election of Donald Trump,” he said.

‘What is the United States really?’

Fernando González spoke from the vantage point of his years living in the United States as part of the working class, including nearly 16 years in federal prisons. He described how, in his final stretch of incarceration, he was transferred from the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, to the one in Safford, Arizona.

After being flown to Phoenix, González said, “I traveled four and a half hours along a highway to a prison in the desert, near the Arizona-New Mexico border and an hour and a half from the border with Mexico. And what I saw through the bus window during that trip was a lesson in the poverty that exists in parts of the United States that we often don’t see.

“We saw small towns that used to be on a railroad line — it was their lifeblood — and now they’re ghost towns.” He pointed to the devastation across the copper mining areas. “But you have to cross a Native American reservation to



Estudios Revolución

Fidel Castro with Randy Perdomo, leader of Federation of University Students, Jan. 23, 2015. “I do not trust the policy of the United States,” Castro said in message to student group. That’s the Socialist Workers Party’s starting point too, said Waters, as it wins youth to building a communist party among workers in United States.

really see what poverty is: the unemployment, the level of alcohol consumption that is a result of these conditions.”

“When we think of the United States we often think of big cities, what we see in U.S. films,” González said. “But the United States has 320 million inhabitants. Maybe 100 million of them live in

big cities like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco. What about the other 220 million? What is the United States really?”

Those class realities of the United States, González said, are what the new books published by Pathfinder explain.

Carnage, deplorables explain workers’ openness

Continued from page 7

basket of irredeemable “deplorables,” at that moment she was finished.

Opportunities and responsibilities

The election was a protest vote in the framework of bourgeois politics, the only framework that exists today for the millions.

It registered the blows dealt since the 2008 world financial crisis to the stability of the two-party system through which the US capitalist class has long governed. Neither party will emerge intact.

Trump’s inauguration boast — “This American carnage stops now” — will not come to be, of course. There are no capitalist policies that can achieve that, and there is no imperialist politician who can change what is going to happen. The law of value is stronger than any of them, or all of them together.

Until we, the working class and our allies, are strong enough to put an end to their system, their crises will contin-

ue to be paid for by working people the world over in our flesh and blood, in the misery of hundreds of millions.

As a result of these conditions — and the disrespectful response by the rulers and their political servants to the victims among working people — there is today greater openness in the US working class than at any moment in our lifetimes to discuss the broadest social questions and political issues. For communists that means growing opportunities along with enormous responsibilities.

Contrary to the picture painted by the liberal media and across “the left,” there is less racism and less anti-immigrant chauvinism today among working people than ever before in US history. Ultraright fringe groups are more marginalized than ever following Trump’s victory.

There is more space, not less, to fight to organize the unorganized, demand amnesty for foreign-born workers, mobilize against police brutality, advance

the struggle for women’s rights, and oppose Washington’s imperialist wars. There is more space to rebuild our unions as instruments of solidarity and struggle.

Most important, there are more opportunities than we’ve known in decades to win young workers and other youth to the need to build a party, a *communist* party, within the vanguard of the working class.

It is along that road that the men and women capable of making a socialist revolution in the US will be forged, as they were here in Cuba.

That is what the books we are presenting here today are about.

In the name of my party, the Socialist Workers Party, I want to say to you, however, that until that battle is won, we will continue to act on Fidel’s words to the Federation of University Students two years ago:

“I do not trust the policy of the United States” — here in Cuba, in the US, or anywhere else in the world.

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Amnesty key for working-class unity

The Socialist Workers Party urges working people to join, build and organize public meetings and protests calling for “Amnesty now! Stop the raids and deportations!” Raise these questions in your union, with your co-workers, at school or at church.

Guidelines issued by the Department of Homeland Security Feb. 20 give the immigration cops more leeway for raids, arrests, detentions and deportations. Coming actions will build on the impressive Feb. 16 mobilization of hundreds of thousands of workers and young people, closing restaurants, stores, factories and construction sites and taking to the streets across the country.

As Washington seeks to bar travel from seven majority-Muslim countries, the Socialist Workers Party says “No to immigration tests based on religion, nationality or political views!”

The objective of the Trump administration, like those before it, is not to stop immigration or get rid of immigrants.

In the recently released Pathfinder book *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible? A Necessary Debate Among Working People*, SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters explains that the working class in the United States,

including the 11 million who are undocumented, is “the source of the capitalists’ surplus value, which in turn is the source of their profits, wealth, social status, and state power. They utterly depend on this massive pool of exploited and superexploited labor.”

This is the basis for the immigration policy of Washington and all capitalist governments worldwide.

Waters says, “The battle to win the labor movement and the big majority of working people to defend the rights of immigrants is inseparable from the battle to organize the working class as a whole and rebuild the trade unions.”

“It is an issue that is determining the future of the labor movement and will continue to do so — much like the fight against Jim Crow segregation did in the 1950s and 1960s, and as the ongoing fight against all forms of racism and discrimination still does.”

The capitalist rulers advance the division between undocumented and native-born workers to prevent us from unifying and fighting for our common working-class interests. One of the central slogans of the Feb. 16 actions was “We are workers, not criminals.” The fight for amnesty — decriminalization — is crucial for the working class.

Anti-Trump furor shows crisis of capitalist parties

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undercut and incapacitate the Trump administration. The middle-class left goes further. “Trump is Hitler with golden locks,” Norman Pollack writes in *Counterpunch*.

The heated invective is a reflection of the underlying instability of the two-party system in the United States, itself a reflection of the deepening crisis of production, trade and profitability. No wing of the Democrats or Republicans has any policy that can reverse the capitalist economic crisis — a more accurate description of the “mess” — because it’s not a question of policy, but of the workings of capitalism itself.

And it’s workers and farmers who face the music, regardless of which capitalist party sits in the White House.

Vox, a news website that promotes the anti-Trump bloc, laid out three Russian-connection allegations Feb. 15: “One centers on Russia’s interference in the election, another centers on just-resigned National Security Adviser Michael Flynn’s improper contact with the Russian ambassador after the election, and a third involves potential blackmail material Russian intelligence may or may not have on the president.”

Though admitting that “none are proven,” Vox says that put together “they point to one inescapable conclusion: Trump’s unprecedented friendliness with Russia’s dictator and willingness to tolerate staff with close Russia ties has already thrown his young administration into chaos.”

Then Vox goes on to spend 18 pages on conjectures about Flynn’s phone calls, Trump’s former campaign manager’s past activities in Ukraine, and what it admits are utterly unsubstantiated charges of hanky-panky by Trump in Moscow in 2013. Along the way, the authors ascribe a scary confidence in the veracity of Washington’s spy agencies.

Trump fired back that the media barrage is nothing but “fake news.” He said he decided to ask for Flynn’s resignation because he didn’t give a fully accurate report to Vice President Mike Pence on his conversation with the Russian ambassador. Even the *Times* had to admit the “transcript [of Flynn’s conversation] was ambiguous enough that Mr. Trump could have justified either firing or retaining Mr. Flynn.”

After decades of Stalinist betrayal of workers’ struggles worldwide and tyranny at home — the opposite of the revolutionary course of the 1917 Russian Revolution led by V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party — the Soviet Union collapsed. Washington acted as if it had won the Cold War, when in reality it had lost. It no longer could use Moscow to mislead and break the battles of the toilers. The U.S. rulers started wars from Iraq to Afghanistan to Somalia, creating chaos and devastation for working people.

While still the dominant economic and military

power in the world, U.S. imperialism is in decline. In the Mideast it has sought to protect its interests by getting Moscow’s help to try to stabilize the situation.

In an interview on Fox news, conservative commentator Bill O’Reilly argued with Trump against forging closer ties to Moscow, saying “Putin’s a killer.”

“What, you think our country’s so innocent?” Trump responded, sending many pundits and capitalist politicians into conniptions. Regardless of Trump’s motivation for his comment, U.S. imperialism’s bloody interventions in the affairs of other nations, CIA and special forces-organized assassinations and economic sabotage are a fact.

Trump points out that his policy is a continuation of the “reset” with Moscow attempted by the Barack Obama administration. It’s a course backed by the majority in the propertied ruling class.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser during the Jimmy Carter administration, wrote in the Feb. 20 *New York Times* that Trump should “recognize that the ideal long-term solution is one in which the three militarily dominant powers — the United States, China and Russia — work together to support global stability.”

Most workers sense that it’s the McCains — and Democrats like Hillary Clinton — who call for a more bellicose stance that pose a greater danger of war. That’s one of the reasons Clinton lost the election.

But “stability” for U.S. imperialism is a pipe dream. As the worldwide crisis of capitalist production and trade continues to unfold, deepening capitalist competition means today’s alliances become tomorrow’s conflicts and wars.

A key reason Trump won a hearing among working people during the election was by admitting that they face economic ruin and promising to break with the establishment and create jobs. It’s too early to know what he will do, so far he has focused on pressing bosses for more production in the U.S. He claims “jobs have already started to surge.”

Trump headed to North Charleston, South Carolina, Feb. 17 for the rollout of the Boeing company’s Dreamliner passenger plane, just two days after the bosses defeated an attempt to unionize the plant.

“This is our house, and our house is going to remain union free!” plant manager Joan Robinson-Berry told the crowd of 2,000 employees and local officials before Trump spoke.

“God bless Boeing,” Trump said. “We’re going to fight for every last American job.”

Far from laying out a road out of the “mess,” Trump’s course, like those of administrations before him, will lead to more and deeper crises at home and abroad. The road out is for workers to break from the bosses’ two-parties and to fight for workers power. That is the course the Socialist Workers Party fights for.

Immigration protests

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Customs Enforcement cops targeted individuals — alleged to have violated various laws — at home, on the street or by having them called into the office at work, where agents grabbed them.

Word about the “Day Without Immigrants” spread like wildfire at restaurants, construction sites, packinghouses and other work places where immigrant workers labor and live coast to coast.

One flyer promoting the protests appealed to “the undocumented, residents, citizens, immigrants from all over the world,” adding that “without us and without our contribution this country would be paralyzed.”

In Washington, D.C., more than 70 restaurants closed for the day. Many of the chefs and owners, who are dependent on immigrant labor, OK’d workers taking off, saying they support the fight for amnesty. Even the cafe inside the Capitol that serves the U.S. Senate shut down, as did seven restaurants at the Pentagon.

Chanting “respect, respect” and carrying signs that said, “I am not a criminal” and “No more abuses,” more than 50 workers started demonstrating outside New York’s Hunts Point produce market in the Bronx — the largest in the world — well before sunrise to convince fellow workers to join the strike.

Nearly 200 people marched though Grand Island, Nebraska, home to a JBS USA slaughterhouse and beef distribution center that employs 3,200 people. “We just want to be treated the same — nobody better than anybody else,” marcher Ramiro Gomez told the *Grand Island Independent*.

“I’m here to see the movement. We’ll see what we can accomplish,” said restaurant cook Efen Rivera, 60, at a march of thousands in Chicago. March organizers announced that workers will go on strike again on May 1, International Workers Day.

About 1,000 marched in St. Paul, Minnesota, including Latinos; Somalis; Native Americans; construction, warehouse, hotel and restaurant workers; unionists; and representatives of Black Lives Matter.

More than 1,000 people joined a demonstration that evening in New York, to protest the detention of Daniel Ramirez in Seattle, one of those picked up during raids there. Ramirez had qualified under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA. The government claims he is a gang member.

The round of attacks on workers without papers comes on the back of grinding depression conditions facing working people. “The last eight years have not been good for us,” Oscar González, said at the New York action. It’s not just the attacks on immigrants, he said, “but the unions have been pushed back.”

Door opened for more deportations

Under Obama administration directives, ICE prioritized immigrants convicted of felonies or “significant” misdemeanors. But those raids, many much larger than the ones ordered by Trump so far, also swept up “low-priority immigrants” who happened to be present at the time.

The Feb. 20 memorandums say that in addition to “criminals” ICE will go after any immigrant who engaged in “willful misrepresentation in connection with any official matter” — such as working under another name — or “abused any program related to receipt of public benefits.” The memos also instruct ICE to keep more immigrants who are appealing deportation orders in prison, instead of allowing them to live at home until a judge hears their case.

The memo maintains Obama’s policy of not deporting “dreamers” nor the parents of U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Senior Homeland Security officials told the press there are no plans for “mass round-ups, mass deportations.”

Trump said Feb. 16 that plans he announced Jan. 27 to bar immigration from seven majority-Muslim countries will be replaced by new, more specific strictures soon. The original was stayed by the courts.

In a second memo, Kelly ordered that plans be prepared to meet Trump’s call for a wall across the border with Mexico. Some 700 miles of wall already exist, covering the most accessible areas, much of it built under Obama.

To carry out all the measures, Kelly says ICE will hire 10,000 more agents and 5,000 more border cops.

Helen Meyers in Twin Cities, Minnesota, contributed to this article.